

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN, TBIO, UR, US

SUBJECT: INTERACADEMY AGREEMENT (21.00): EXCHANGE HOFFMAN
REQUEST FOR EXTENSION

1. DR. ROBERT HOFFMAN, AN INTERACADEMY AGREEMENT EXCHANGE, HAS INFORMED SCIENCE OFFICE THAT HE DESIRES TO EXTEND HIS STAY AN ADDITIONAL FOUR MONTHS IN ORDER TO COMPLETE A PROMISING JOINT RESEARCH PROJECT. HOFFMAN, WHO IS ON LEAVE FROM THE GENETICS UNIT OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL, IS COLLABORATING WITH SOVIET SCIENTISTS FROM SEVERAL LABORATORIES IN AN EFFORT (1) TO PRODUCE ARTIFICIAL LIPID VESICLES CONTAINING DNA AND (2) TO INTRODUCE THESE VESICLES INTO GENETICALLY DEFICIENT CELLS. THIS RESEARCH HAS BROAD IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TREATMENT OF GENETIC DISEASES.

2. HOFFMAN REPORTED THAT THE JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAM IS MAKING GOOD HEADWAY AND SHOWS CONSIDERABLE PROMISE OF SUCCESS. MORE TIME, HOWEVER, WILL BE NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE PLANNED WORK. THE SOVIET-AMERICAN TEAM HAS ALREADY SUCCEEDED IN INCORPORATING HIGH MOLECULAR WEIGHT DNA INTO LIPID VESICLES AND IS COMPLETING A JOINT PAPER DESCRIBING THIS EXPERIMENT. HOFFMAN AND HIS SOVIET COLLEAGUES ARE NOW TRYING TO DESIGN LIPID VESICLES CONTAINING DNA THAT CAN BE INTRODUCED INTO SPECIFIC CELLS. THEY WILL ALSO PREPARE A JOINT PAPER DESCRIBING THIS PROCEDURE.

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3. ACCORDING TO HOFFMAN, THE THREE LABORATORIES IN WHICH THE WORK IS BEING CONDUCTED (PROFESSOR L.D. BERGELSON'S LABORATORY OF LIPID BIOCHEMISTRY AT THE SHEMYAKIN INSTITUTE, PROFESSOR G.P. GEORGIYEV'S LABORATORY OF NUCLEIC ACID BIOCHEMISTRY AT THE INSTITUTE OF MOLECULAR BIOLOGY, AND PROFESSOR I.M. GEL'FAND'S LABORATORY OF

CELL BIOLOGY AT MGU) PROPOSED THAT HE STAY AND ARE SUPPORTING THE EXTENSION WITH THE USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES. DR. KULAKOV OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF THE ACADEMY ADVISED INFORMALLY THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN OBTAINING THIS EXTENSION, THOUGH IT WILL HAVE TO BE ARRANGED BETWEEN THE US AND SOVIET ACADEMIES.

4. COMMENT. HOFFMAN'S STAY HAS APPARENTLY BEEN MOST PRODUCTIVE AND IS A VIVID EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY PURPOSEFUL COOPERATION. HE BELIEVES THAT THE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED JOINTLY OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS COUPLED WITH THE LABORATORY FACILITIES AVAILABLE OFFER A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE IN THIS AREA OF GENETICS AND ALSO HIGHLIGHT US-USSR SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION. SCIENCE OFFICE CONSIDERS HOFFMAN'S PROJECT TO BE USEFUL. US NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES MAY WISH TO LEND ITS SUPPORT TO HOFFMAN'S REQUEST AND SEEK FORMAL APPROVAL FOR AN EXTENSION OF HIS STAY FROM THE USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES. END COMMENT.

5. FOR EUR/SOV/EXCHANGES. PLEASE PASS THE FOREGOING TO LARRY MITCHELL AT NAS. PLEASE ADVISE NAS REACTION.

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